



Summer 2004

ZOOM

in on america

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ART SNAPSHOTS



The evaporation* of the borders between nations, at least in the field of art, mirrors the disappearance of all kinds of other boundaries as well.

Hardly anyone worries about the unique characteristics of painting and sculpture any more. Just as artists hopscotch* around the globe, they vault* effortlessly across media, producing work that simultaneously incorporates* not only traditional materials but also digital technology, theatrical installation, photography, performance, music, film, and video. - Eleanor Heartney, art critic

* See Glossary on page 4.

On the left: "Fele's For Sale" by Charles Searles at the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists in the Roxbury neighborhood in Boston. (©AP/WWP/Chitose Suzuki).

Charles Searles is not only a painter and a sculptor but also a percussionist.

Some texts on this and subsequent pages have been adapted from the Electronic Journal: *The Arts in America: New Directions* available online at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0403/ijse/ijse0403.htm>

ZOOM in on America

This is the National Gallery of Art, East Wing in Washington, D.C., designed by I.M. Pei. Did you know that the famous and controversial glass construction in front of the Louvre Museum in Paris - Pyramide du Louvre - was the idea of an American?

Photo: Ezra Stoller/ESTO



It was also designed by I.M. Pei, who moved to the United States from his native China to study architecture at the age of 17.

Play online design games at: <http://ndm.si.edu/GAMES/>

Pei was awarded the 2003 National Design Award for Lifetime Achievement. The National Design Awards have been awarded since 2000 by the Smithsonian Institution's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, the only museum in the United States devoted exclusively to historic and contemporary design. (<http://ndm.si.edu>)

■ Reflecting Absence

The winner of the World Trade Center Site Memorial Competition

"This memorial proposes a space that resonates with the feelings of loss and absence that were generated by the destruction of the World Trade Center and the taking of thousands of lives on September 11, 2001 and February 26, 1993. It is located in a field of trees that is interrupted by two large voids* containing recessed pools. The pools and the ramps that surround them encompass the footprints of the twin towers. A cascade of water that describes the perimeter of each square feeds the pools with a continuous stream. They are large voids, open and visible reminders of the absence. ...



The memorial plaza is designed to be a mediating space; it belongs both to the city and to the memorial. Located at street level to allow for its integration into the fabric of the city, the plaza encourages the use of this space by New Yorkers on a daily basis. The memorial grounds will not be isolated from the rest of the city; they will be a living part of it." (*From the Statement by the designers Michael Arad and Peter Walker*)

To learn more about the project, please visit: <http://www.wtcsitememorial.org>

* See Glossary on page 4.

■ Design on the Web

Design Addict

<http://www.designaddict.com>

100 Years of Design

<http://new.idsa.org/webmodules/articles/anmviewer.asp?a=51&z=28>

Design Engine

<http://www.design-engine.com>

It's hard to generalize about the arts in a country housing some 1,200 symphony orchestras, 117 professional opera companies, more than 400 dance companies, and 425 nonprofit professional theaters.

In the USA there is no central ministry of culture that sets national policy for the arts. Two endowments - the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities - provide support for individual artists and scholars as well as institutions.

Private donations have always provided the major support for American culture. Private spending for the arts in the USA for the year 2002 has been calculated at roughly \$12.1 billion.

"The American system of arts support is complex, decentralized, diverse, and dynamic. It combines federal, state, and local government support with private subvention* from individuals, corporations, and foundations as well as ... box office receipts*," says Dana Gioia, a poet and chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

"... If the American arts system is remarkably complex, decentralized, and dynamic, it is also uniquely effective - producing a cultural landscape of enormous size and unmatched diversity," adds Gioia.

*See Glossary on page 4.

■ Movies

For 10 days each January, the small winter sports community of Park City, Utah, is transformed into one of the most vibrant spots on the landscape of American movies. The Sundance Film Festival showcases the phenomenon of independent filmmaking in the United States — that is, films made by producers outside the Hollywood studio system. A diverse group of over 36,000 participants attends the Festival each year, including directors, actors, film industry executives, and film lovers.

The Festival is a program of the Sundance Institute, founded by Robert Redford in 1981 and dedicated to the development of artists of independent vision and the exhibition of their new works.

More information about the Festival: <http://festival.sundance.org/>

Below is an excerpt from a conversation with Geoffrey Gilmore, responsible for film selection and the organization of the annual Sundance event.

Q: From your point of view, what are the most exciting developments in American movies today?

A: There is a whole new generation of directors who are doing movies on both sides of the line — independent, low budget productions and major studio films. The idea that these two sectors would never meet was talked about at the beginning of the 1990s, but you can't say that anymore, not with directors like Todd Haynes (*Far From Heaven*) or Alexander Payne (*About Schmidt*) on the scene. ...

The independent sector represents less than 10 percent of the total box office. But it has infused* Hollywood with remarkable talent — leading actors like Renée Zellweger, Julianne Moore, Adrien Brody, and Nicole Kidman, and directors like Haynes, Steven Soderbergh, Quentin Tarantino, and Gus Van Sant. Now these directors can make films whenever and wherever they want — inside and outside the major studio system.

* See Glossary on page 4.

The Sundance/NHK International Filmmakers Award was created to honor and support emerging filmmakers with their next screenplays. One filmmaker from each of 3 regions (Europe, United States, and Latin America) is selected for his/her originality, talent and vision. In 2004, the winner from Europe was the Hungarian György Pálfi for his screenplay *Taxidermia*.

Mr. Pálfi's first movie, *Hukkle* (2002), was highly acclaimed both nationally and internationally, and was the recipient of several awards in Budapest, San Sebastian, Kiev, Santa Fé, Rome, Hong Kong, and Cleveland.

For more information, see <http://www.hukkle.hu>

■ Sounds

Pop music plays a major role in the American entertainment industry, with particular help these days from female vocalists who dominate the radio, such as Sheryl Crow (shades of the "California rock" style of the old band The Eagles) and Lucinda Williams (a fusion* of blues, country, and rock).

Older styles of pop continue to be a strong part of the American musical landscape. Sounds from even earlier in rock history are never far away; the group Sugar Ray incorporates so many elements from old rock styles that the result is both nostalgic and refreshing.

Newcomer Norah Jones, who in 2003 received *all* five Grammy Awards she was nominated for, is an intimate singer who proves the vitality of the softer rock beat and meaningful lyrics.

The pop music field is still spreading its stylistic influences around a world that has never lost its appetite for the latest American sounds and stars.

*See Glossary on page 4.



Photo: Singer Bootsy Collins arrives with a member of Parliament Funkadelic at the 46th Annual Grammy Awards, Feb. 8, 2004, in Los Angeles. (©AP/WWP/Mark J. Terrill)

The GRAMMY Awards, which cover 105 categories as diverse as pop, rock, jazz, blues, rap, classical and folk, celebrate the best in the recording arts.

The 2004 Grammy Awards ceremony featured 19 musical performances, including those by Prince and Beyoncé, OutKast, Black Eyed Peas, Justin Timberlake, the Foo Fighters and jazz legend Chick Corea.

Taken together, as CBS President Leslie Moonves said, "It all adds up to one exciting event: the music industry's biggest showcase*."

<http://www.grammy.com/>

* See Glossary on page 4.

Activity Page

Win a Book!

To take part in a drawing for a set of 3 large U.S. maps e-mail us the answer to the following question:

Which American artist is a painter, a sculptor and a percussionist?

Send your answer to: zoom@usembassy.hu

Please state your name, address, and age.

Deadline: September 15

Winners will be notified by September 30.

Good Luck!

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Zoom is available online at

<http://www.usembassy.hu/zoom.htm>

Please send requests for subscription and comments to: zoom@usembassy.hu

Regional English Language Office
rel@mail@usembassy.hu

Information Resource Center
infousa@usembassy.hu

Mailing address:
U.S. Embassy
Public Affairs Section
1054 Budapest Szabadság tér 12.

Who Said That?

Match the quote with its author!

A doctor can bury his mistakes but an architect can only advise his clients to plant vines.

Blues is easy to play, but hard to feel.

My instinct about painting says, 'If you don't think about it, it's right.' As soon as you have to decide and choose, it's wrong. And the more you decide about, the more wrong it gets.

If you have to have a job in this world, a high-priced movie star is a pretty good gig.

Tom Hanks
Jimi Hendrix
Frank Lloyd Wright
Alfred Hitchcock
Andy Warhol

For me, the cinema is not a slice of life, but a piece of cake.

A great source for quotes: <http://www.bartleby.com>

Find Correct Answers at: http://www.usembassy.hu/zoom_key.htm

Artists' Tools

Which art disciplines are these used in?

metronome - *music*
glaze -
easel -
mouthpiece -
tap shoes -
canvas -
prop -
clay -
clapboard -
tutu -

Glossary

Explanation of 10 difficult words with reference to the page where they appear:

box office receipts - income from ticket sales (2)
evaporation - disappearance (1)
fusion - joining of diverse elements (3)
to hopscotch - to move as if by jumping (1)
to incorporate - to unite, blend, combine (2)
to infuse - to introduce (3)
a showcase - a medium for exhibiting something in an attractive aspect (3)
subvention - financial support from the government (2)
to vault - to do something as if by a jump (1)
void - an empty space (2)

Some Art Critics Can Make Your Blood Boil

Use the following idioms in the sentences below. Sometimes changing the form of the verb is necessary!

a flash in the pan
a bone of contention
to beat around the bush

to bomb
a bitter pill to swallow

The highly unfavorable review from the usually laudatory critic was for the sculptor.

An artist to an art critic: "Stop! Just tell me what you think!"

In a theater play review: "The new play by Robert Merredith closed on the first night. It"

The two editors of our local newspaper always have different opinions on the artistic life in our little community. The subject is a between them.

"I know some media have called him the best new film director in the country, but I think he's just"